

To the Members of the California State Senate:

I am returning Senate Bill 239 without my signature.

I vetoed a bill last year, SB 1164, which would essentially accomplish the same purpose as this bill.

I believe that open access by the press is an important component of ensuring efficiency and effectiveness of government programs. However, this bill is unnecessary because the media currently enjoys wide ranging access to both prisons and inmates, including the right to interview random inmates during tours and specific inmates during the visitation program.

The California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation's current policy is modeled after policies that have been upheld by the U.S. Supreme Court. The policy strikes the important balance between media access and the appropriate correctional decisions that must take into account the orderly administration of prisons.

Finally, it is important to avoid treating inmates as celebrities. Activities that would glamorize criminals at the expense of victims and the general public are unacceptable. A free flow of information from the prison environment into the outside world has taken place under the current policy as evidenced by the many published press accounts in the past year.

For these reasons I am unable to support this measure.

Sincerely,

Arnold Schwarzenegger